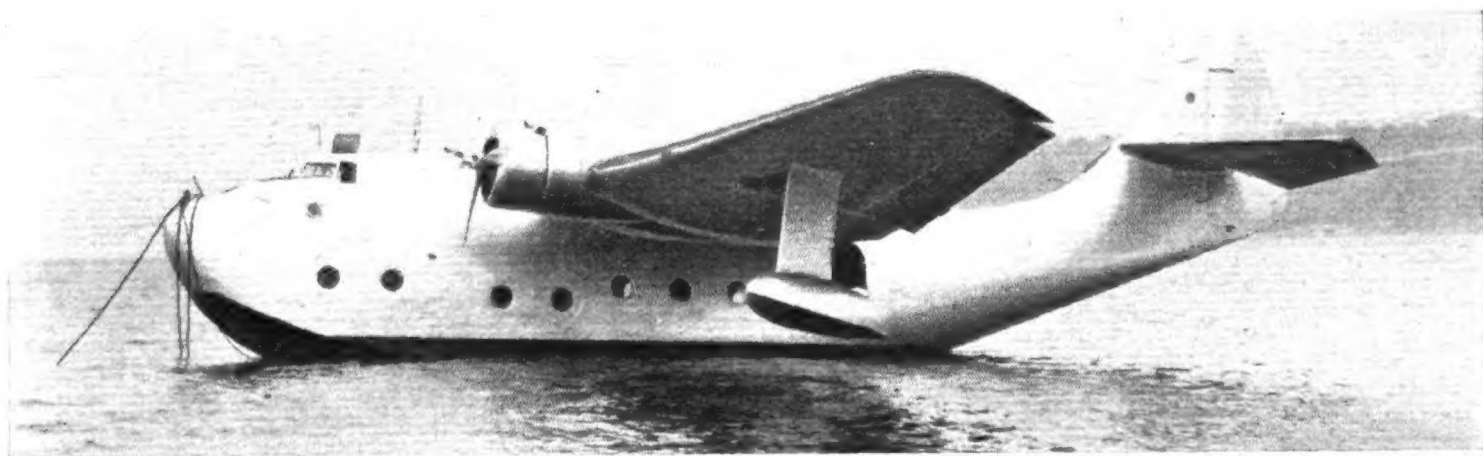


COMMERCIAL AVIATION

— AIRLINES — AIRPORTS —



THE SEA-DOUGLAS : The new Douglas DF flying-boat has, since a photograph was originally reproduced in *Flight*, been put through its paces and appears to have performed well. The machine is, of course, of all-metal construction and an interesting departure from normal Douglas practice is the use of skin corrugations in the wing covering, which, incidentally, is fabric aft of the rear spar. The recess into which the wing-float partially retracts can be seen in this view.

THE WEEK AT CROYDON

Pyrotechnics and Air Raid Precautions : One Swift-moving Body : Safety First

ON certain days of last week the scenes and sounds reminded me of bits out of one of the early B.B.C. aviation plays, largely composed of incidental noises—police rattles, tea-trays, sandpapering, and popping noises like those made by small boys, parrots and bottles of effervescent fluid.

There was the drone of aeroplanes just overhead but invisible; much activity with turnip bombs; and, at times, a perfect volley of green Very lights. Marksman-ship, however, was poor on the whole, though a direct hit was nearly scored upon a defenceless D.H.86 on the tarmac.

Perfect Control

Friday was an astonishing day, for in weather which a few years ago would have definitely grounded all commercial aeroplanes, pilots of all nations were coming in one after another at short intervals—a fact which speaks volumes, not only for pilots and their aeroplanes, but also for the excellence of the Croydon traffic control. Only those who are aware of the difficulties of air traffic control can fully appreciate this effort. Capt. O. P. Jones was unfortunate with *Heracles* on that day, for somebody had left a wheelbarrow about and he saw it through the fog only at the last minute, avoided it, and made a landing which did less damage than might have been the case if the machine had been in less competent hands. The barrow was, I believe, actually within an area marked off as not serviceable, but in the fog the actual markers were practically invisible.

What with rockets, roaring aeroplanes and lit-up skies, it was like living in an air raid at times last week, and on Wednesday the authorities added a realistic touch by practising Air Raid Precaution No. 1 most of the afternoon and evening. This consists of switching all lights off and on at frequent intervals, and though cunning officials pretend it is a mere matter of failure of the electric light system no doubt it is really part of the elaborate system of precautions which is so hush-hush

that nobody knows anything about it. I confess I am mildly interested to know more of this.

Everyone all over the country is talking about air raid precautions and what not, and Croydon is an obvious early target—and a vulnerable one. Are we to expect the Crimea to repeat itself (when they issued thousands of left boots and no right ones), and shall we be hurriedly issued with a blue R.A.F. gaiter apiece instead of a gas mask? After all, both words begin with "G." In that case, "All will be gas and gaiters," as the mad gentleman in *Nicholas Nickleby* remarked. "Works and Buildings" doubtless know a good gas-proof hole somewhere (they are always digging holes, anyway), and probably there is some system for preventing the numerous women, children and acting first officers from panicking. Possibly, too, there is a cunning scheme for setting all hangars alight in order to prevent the raiders from doing so. If, on the other hand, nothing has been done about it, how about setting up some swift-moving, decisive body like the Maybury Committee to brood over the matter?

Modern Methods

On Saturday morning various Air Ministry officials were at Croydon awaiting an opportunity to go up in a D.L.H. Junkers Ju.52 in order to test the Lorenz system. Weather was against such experiments, however, for there was too much air traffic about, and, with fog lying low on the ground, it was easy enough to find the Airport, but very difficult to land on it. Looking up through the haze at one time, I saw a K.L.M. Douglas looking like a big silver fish as the sun shone on it, then *Scylla*, and, again, a D.H.86, yet there was no sun at all on the ground. It is a pity, sometimes, that we cannot disembark passengers by means of lifts. Cases occurred last week of passengers who flew over Croydon either once or several times, and then had to go all the way back to Lympe to disembark.

One visitor whose harm of manner won golden opinions was the French ex-war-ace, Capt. Molinier, co-pilot to Jim Mollison. The latter, looking from the Airport Hotel win-